



# PLAYBOOK

## 7 Tangible Ways to Integrate Empathy into Email Marketing

From EiQ 2023, hosted by Ansira

A photograph of wooden blocks spelling out the word "EMPATHY" in a row on a dark surface. In the background, three more wooden blocks with the letters "C", "P", and "R" are visible, slightly out of focus. A blue rounded rectangle is on the left side of the image.

EMPATHY

**"Empathy** is a choice, and it's a vulnerable one."

– BRENÉ BROWN

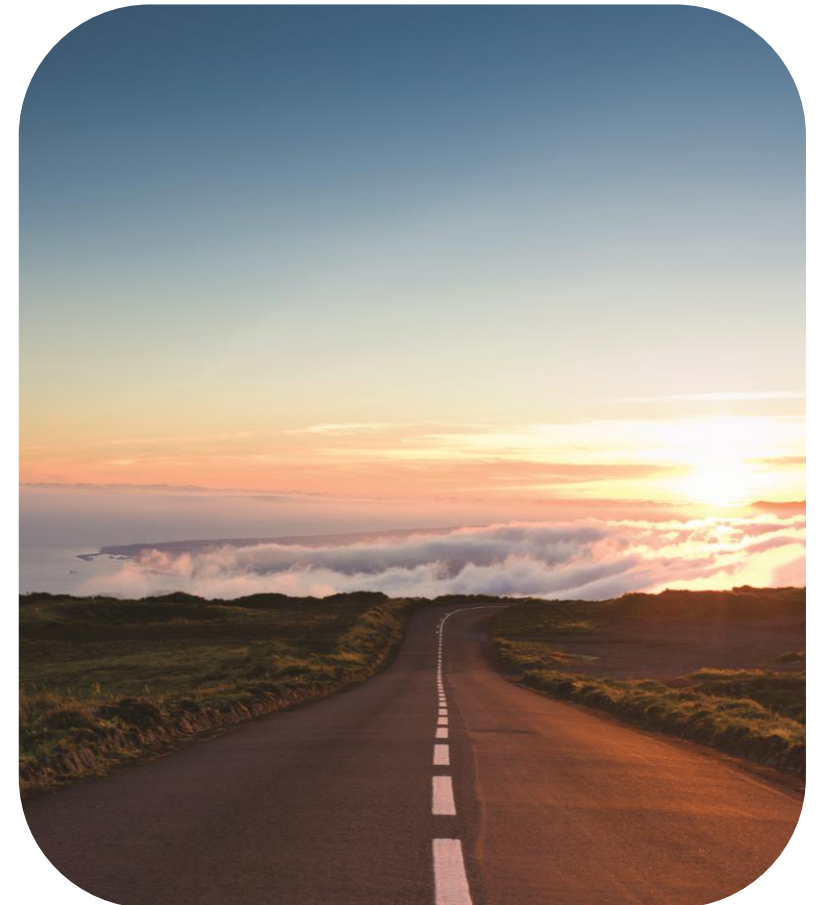
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# CONNECT ON A DEEPER LEVEL

We as marketers have to choose to be empathetic in how we communicate. It's a conscious decision and one we must practice making.

However, this empathy transformation is not going to happen overnight. Also, when we make this decision, it makes us vulnerable and can be uncomfortable.

As a result, though, consumers will be able to connect with us on much deeper levels because we're humanizing the brand in that way. They expect us to connect with them but have strong opinions about what that looks like. Everything from the things we're doing today, like sending the right message at the right time, to some deeper levels of empathy.



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# THE GROUND RULES

Be authentic and stay true to your mission and values.



Don't try to be like other brands. Be unapologetically YOU.

Know your audience.



Remember why – and for whom – your brand was created.

Be outwardly accountable.



Embrace the good and the bad.



# 1

## DON'T MAKE THEM TELL YOU TWICE

Consumers expect you to use data they've willingly given.

### Case in Point

If a consumer has already given you a piece of data, for example, their child's name and birthdate, they expect that you have ingested that data AND:

- At the very least: You will not have to ask them again
- You will do something that benefits them with that data; there will be a value-exchange.

**Note:** When brands ignore the data consumers willingly provide, they feel like they're like they're not being heard and that damages the relationship.



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# 2

## **CURATE THEIR HEADLINES**

Prioritize email body copy based on direct or inferred preferences.

### **Reference available data for context clues**

- Preference center data/other zero party data
- Content engagement
- Past purchase or click behavior
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party data

### **Two approaches**

1. Create separate email versions
2. Dynamically organize existing content based on most relevant messages

### **Tailor the subject line**



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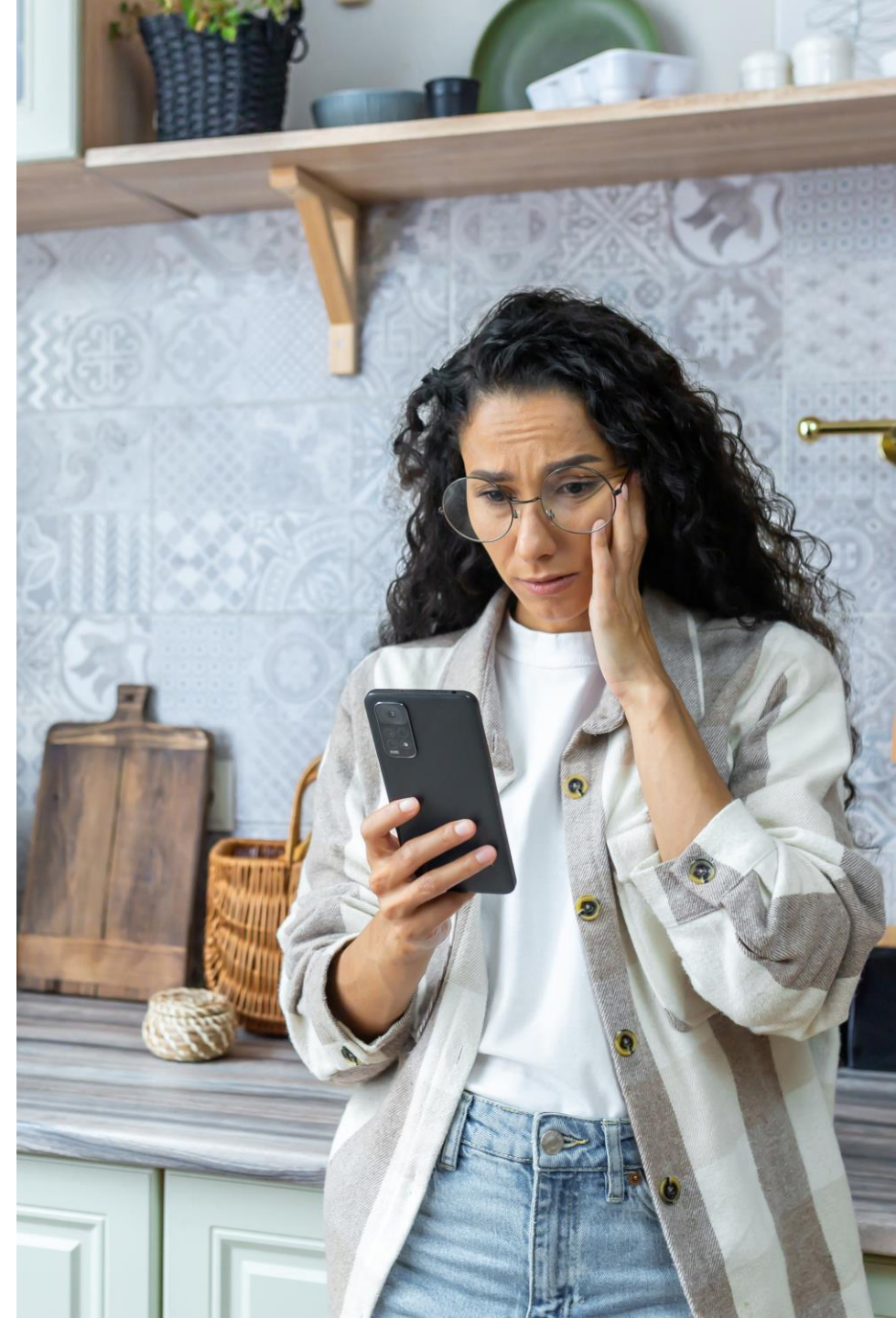
# 3

## AVOID DARK PATTERNS

Dark patterns are manipulative tactics designed to deceptively nudge a consumer towards a purchase.

**These types of behaviors are the opposite of empathy. Some examples include:**

- Misleading subject lines
- Hidden opt-outs
- Pre-checked opt-ins
- Tricky questions
- Manipulative language
- Confirm shaming



# 4

# ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK

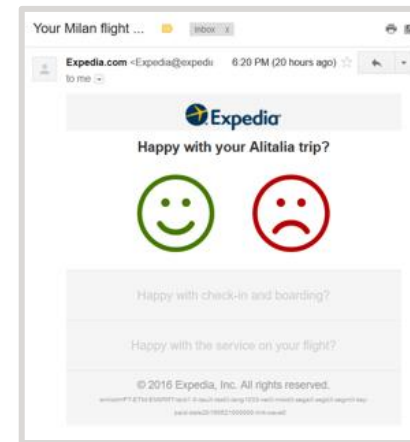
Get them talking with a poll or survey

## People LOVE to share their opinions

- According to a study by Google, 61% of customers are willing to participate in surveys when asked.
- According to a study by Deloitte, 62% of consumers are willing to share their data with companies in exchange for better products, services, or prices.

## Why It Matters

- When we ask their opinion, consumers feel like they matter; like their opinion matters to us.
- Interactivity also serves as a pay-off to opening the email, priming the pump to boost open rates in the future.



An advertisement for T Rewards featuring a Slurpee promotion. It includes the T Rewards logo, navigation links (T Rewards, Eat &amp; Drink, Slurpee, Find a Location), and the headline "GET AN A+ IN SNACKING 101". The offer is: "Get 50% off a large Slurpee® drink when you buy a fresh bakery item by scanning your 7-Eleven® app with purchase. So put down the books and pick up the sweets. Hurry! Offer only runs 4/25/18-5/1/18." There is a "SEE MY OFFERS" button and images of a Slurpee and a donut. Below this is a "FACT: SNACK POWER = BRAIN POWER" section with a ruler and text: "Avoid study fatigue and get snack superpowers with these energizing caffeinated drinks!" with a "SEE MORE" button and images of a 7-Eleven cup and a Monster can. At the bottom is a "WHAT'S YOUR STUDY STYLE?" section with four options: "ALL-NIGHTER" (An all-nighter the night before should do it.), "ALWAYS PREPARED" (I prepare weeks, even months, in advance.), "WHAT TEST?" (There's a test tomorrow?!), and "STUDY?" (I'm too busy #adulting). Each option has a "SELECT" button.



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# 5

## BE A SENSITIVITY SUPERHERO

Anticipate the need before it's even acknowledged.

### Walk a mile in their shoes

- Allow consumers to opt-out, opt-down or "Pause"; give consumers the control over which comms they want.
- Know when to employ Active Audience Suppression
  - Consider localized suppression after a natural disaster or regional tragedy
  - Consider implementing suppression business rules to help prevent inbox fatigue for consumers being over-targeted



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# 6

# MAKE THEIR LIFE BETTER

Intercept consumers in their context.

## Help Them

Share truly useful information that is important/helpful to them.

- Location Construction Example: Send them alternate parking details and/or a promo code for delivery
- Dining Reservation Example: Let them know of any menu changes, substitutions, etc. for the day of their reservation

## Delight Them

Bring a smile to their face with something unexpected.

- Brand-appropriate humor
- Playful imagery, layout, or content
- Integrate gamification elements



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# TAKE STOCK

Implement an email checklist.

## Empathy Guardrails

- Build out your own email empathy guardrails
- Vet all emails through the lens of the empathy guardrails to ensure they meet the minimum empathy standards
- Keep it simple and ladder back to brand mission and values





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# PUT YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION

Overhauling your email communication strategy might feel like a tough mountain to climb, but these seven steps are a great place to begin as you reevaluate how you engage with your customers via email and beyond.

If you need a partner to guide you through this process, Ansira's team of experts is ready to dive deep into your current strategy and craft a holistic plan to bring more empathy to your customer interactions.

[Contact us](#) today.

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Renee has 15+ years of strategy experience that is primarily agency-driven and heavily steeped in all things digital and media. Her expertise spans research and insights, experience planning, content strategy, and client strategy for top brands across multiple industry verticals. Beard's approach to problem-solving is fueled by curiosity and combines creativity, empathy, data, and very often, a healthy dose of calculated risk.



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**THANK YOU!**

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